

ERIN MENDENHALL
MAYOR



LORENA RIFFO-JENSON
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT of ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Salt Lake Art Design Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 5th, 2025

5:00 – 6:30 pm

PRESENT:

Tiffini Porter
Michael Mejia

Colour Maisch
Nate King

Jen Lopez

STAFF MEMBERS

Felicia Baca, Executive Director, Arts Council
Laurel Cannon Alder, Deputy Director, Arts Council
Renato Olmedo-González, Public Art Program Manager, Arts Council
Amy Childress, Public Art Program Coordinator, Arts Council

EXCUSED:

N/A

GUESTS:

Tom Millar, Planning and Design Division Director, SLC Public
Lands
Trent Smith, Bliss Foundation for the Arts
Tristan Gray, Bliss Foundation for the Arts

Mission: To amplify art in Salt Lake City to enrich, enhance, and build a dynamic city where art and artists thrive.

AGENDA

I. Call to Order, Introductions, and Welcome

Mr. Renato Olmedo-González welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated the Art Design Board's mission. He had everyone in attendance introduce themselves.

II. Approval of January 8th, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Amy Childress brought up a change to the draft of the January 8th, 2025 meeting minutes that had been previously shared with the Board prior to today's meeting. The amendment addressed the fact that the during the January 8th, 2025 meeting, the Board decided to not submit an alternative artist finalists to the Mayor for the Pioneer Park public art project. All Board members agreed with this amendment. Mr. Michael Mejia made a motion to approve the January 8th, 2025 meeting amended minutes. Ms. Tiffani porter seconded, all Board members in attendance voted for approval.

III. Anna Campbell Bliss Artwork Donation

Mr. Olmedo-González provided background on the connection between the Bliss Foundation for the Arts and the Salt Lake City Public Art Program. In the fall of 2024, the Foundation, which manages the estates of Utah artists Robert Bliss and Anna Campbell Bliss, reached out to the program to explore placing artworks from their collection into public collections across Utah. During a visit to the Foundation's studio, Mr. Olmedo-González discussed the potential donation of two-dimensional

artworks to the Public Art Program's Fine Art Collection, which consists of around 150 pieces, including the Mayoral Portrait collection at the City and County Building. If approved, the artworks would be installed on City property, likely in the City and County Building.

The Bliss Foundation selected five artworks that were frame-ready and in good condition for potential donation, which was a request by the Public Art Program. Some of the artworks were chosen because they evoke a connection to Salt Lake City, particularly through landscape representations. By Ordinance, the Salt Lake Art Design Board is required to consider artwork donations to Salt Lake City and make recommendations for such to the Mayor, who has final approval. If approved, a formal donation process with the City will begin. Once the pieces are officially part of the Fine Art Collection, they will be displayed on city property.

The Bliss Foundation's Mr. Trent Smith attended this meeting. He introduced himself and gave a background on his connection to the Foundation. He worked as a screen printer for Anna Campbell Bliss for a number years. Ms. Campbell Bliss passed away in 2015, leaving a significant trust, known as the Robert L. and Ann C. Bliss Memorial Trust (or Studio Trust), to preserve her work and studio. This trust, managed by six board members, has spent the last decade documenting her extensive body of work, which includes about 4,000 pieces. To honor her legacy, the trust is interested in donating her artwork across the Intermountain West, including to the Salt Lake City Arts Council.

Mr. Tristan Gray from the Bliss Foundation discussed the specific artworks that were chosen for potential donation to the Salt Lake City Public Art Program and presented them, in person, to the Board for consideration. He presented a 1984 oil on rag titled *Study Detail for a Folding Screen*, as well as a set of metal plates from the 1989 installation *Windows*, which featured screen prints on steel plates. He also introduced an untitled piece from the 1990s *Moonshade* series and a final screenprint from the *Humanscale* series from 2004, which is a variation of the earlier metal plate piece in a unique purple color. These works are representative of Anna's unique approach to art, including her focus on photography and screen printing techniques, across various decades.

Mr. Michael Mejia made a motion to accept the Bliss Foundation for the Arts Donation to Salt Lake City that will be recommended to the Mayor for donation. Mr. Nate King seconded. All those present voted in favor.

IV. *Unifying Artwork* (GO Bond) – Finalist Selection

Ms. Childress provided an overview of the *Unifying Artworks for Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Bond Sites* public art project, explaining the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that was open to artists in the Pre-Qualified Artist Pool. The project stems from the November 2022 approval of an \$85 million general obligation bond by Salt Lake City voters. This bond will fund the creation of new parks, renovations of existing ones, and the development of the city's first regional park since the 1950s. The Public Lands Department aims to unify these bond sites through public art, placing sculptures in all seven city council districts to connect residents with parks and natural spaces.

Ms. Childress explained the scope of the project, which will commission four artists or artist-led teams to create sculptures inspired by Salt Lake City's parks and natural spaces. Each selected artist will design a 1- to 2-foot-tall model, which will then be replicated in bronze by the Metal Arts Foundry and installed at the bond-funded park sites. The goal of the artwork is to represent key natural elements of Salt Lake City's parks and trails while celebrating the city's cultural history, diverse communities, and vibrant neighborhoods. The sculptures will also reflect environmental initiatives and the beauty of nature in Salt Lake City.

The project's budget is \$2,000 per commission, with a limit of one commission per artist or artist-led team. This budget covers artist fees, materials, and transportation of the artwork. The artists will not be responsible for fabrication or installation, as these tasks will be managed by the foundry and the City. Ms. Childress also outlined the selection criteria, which include professional experience in public art, the creation of unique and site-specific work, and the willingness to collaborate with the Art Design Board and fabricators to meet project goals and deadlines.

The process for finalists involves two virtual meetings: an orientation on February 11, 2025, and a presentation of conceptual proposals on April 2, 2025. Finalists will present scaled designs or models of their sculptures to the Salt Lake Art Design Board, and the board will recommend four artists or artist-led teams to the mayor for final approval. Each finalist will receive a \$200 stipend for design development and proposal presentations, which is included in the overall commission amount.

Ms. Childress outlined the project schedule, starting with the Board's selection of up to five finalists on February 5, 2025, who will submit conceptual proposals by March 26, 2025. The finalists will present their proposals to the Salt Lake Art Design Board on April 2, 2025, with commission recommendations and mayoral approval expected by mid-April. Contracting will take place in spring 2025, followed by artwork model fabrication in summer 2025 and bronze fabrication in fall 2025 through winter 2026. Installation will occur as park projects are completed, with most finished by 2029. Mr. Tom Millar also discussed the construction timelines for each park site.

Ms. Childress explained that 17 artists from the pre-qualified artist pool submitted their interest in the project, and a shortlist of 10 artists was created. The top seven artists, color-coded as green, are Lenka Konopasek, Traci O'Very Covey, Karl Hale, Jason Manley, Trent Call, Jann Haworth, and Chuck Landvatter. The next three, color-coded as yellow, are Lindsay Huss, Matt Monsoon, and Sarina Jones. Ms. Childress also presented images of the work submitted by all interested artists.

The Board discussed the artist shortlist and whether to move any of the yellow-listed artists to the green list. Ms. Tiffini Porter suggested promoting Jann Haworth within the green list due to her compelling figurative work, potentially replacing Karl Hale. Mr. Mejia supported this idea, while Mr. King liked that Hale had foundry experience, but Mr. Olmedo-González clarified that artists don't need foundry experience since they won't be fabricating their sculptures. Ms. Porter noted that she had seen all the artists' 3D work except Chuck Landvatter's, who's 2D design was translated into a neon sign for the *Life on State* public art project. She also expressed curiosity about what Lenka Konopasek, Traci O'Very Covey, Jason Manley, and Trent Call might create, while Mr. Olmedo-González pointed out that Call, Manley, and Haworth had not yet been commissioned by the Public Art Program.

Ms. Porter mentioned interest in seeing what Sarinda Jones could come up with, while Ms. Jen Lopez brought up Matt Monsoon, noting the Board's previous interest in getting him more 3D experience. Mr. Olmedo-González shared that Monsoon was recently commissioned for the 500 North Traffic Circle project. The Board showed interest in Lenka Konopasek, Jason Manley, Trent Call, and Jann Haworth. Mr. Mejia suggested including Sarinda Jones in the final five. Mr. Olmedo-González noted that Traci O'Very Covey and Konopasek have had several commissions from the Public Art Program in the past, leading Ms. Porter to suggest swapping Covey with Sarinda Jones.

Mr. Michael Mejia made a motion for Lenka Konopasek, Jann Haworth, Trent Call, Jason Manley, and Sarinda Jones to be the 5 finalists for the *Unifying Artworks for Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Bond Sites*. Who will present their conceptual designs at the April 2nd, 2025 Art Design Board meeting. Ms. Porter Seconded. All members in attendance voted in favor.

V. Public Comment

None were received

VI. Other Business / Adjourn

The Public Art Program shared several important updates with the Board. Mr. Olmedo-González reminded members that all meetings are public, and after a selection is made, Board members may provide feedback to artists who reach out by explaining the basis of the decision and suggesting they listen to the meeting recording. However, during open calls, Board members are not allowed to provide guidance. If contacted by an artist during this period, they must notify Mr. Olmedo-González, who will then reach out to the artist. Additionally, Mr. Olmedo-González requested two volunteers to attend interviews for Design Board Candidates and one volunteer for the Salt Lake Arts Council's Board.

An upcoming event for the Life on State public art project was also announced. The program will host an artist celebration and community walking tour on February 24th, with the celebration from 5:30–6:30 PM, followed by the tour. Updates were provided on several ongoing projects, including the 400 South Viaduct Trail public art, where the City will now manage the fabrication and installation process. Mr. Olmedo-González plans to share the final design with the Board. The 500 North Roundabout Fairpark project has received city approval, and installation is expected in March.

Another key update was regarding the Fleet Block project, where the Salt Lake Arts Council and the City are working together to develop a plan for the site. The public art commission will be integrated into the open space with an emphasis on community engagement. Multiple artists will be involved, alongside community members, to guide the process. Beginning on February 9th, a fence will be placed around the site, officially closing it to the public, with the community already informed about the development.

The *Seven Canyons Refuge* public art project, led by artist Stephen Goldsmith, is progressing and expected to be completed by September 2025. Mr. Olmedo-González also shared updates on the *Wake the Great Salt Lake* public art project. The Salt Lake City Arts Council has signed contracts with two internationally renowned artists who will create proposals for temporary installations at the Great Salt Lake. More information about these proposals will be shared in the coming months. Ms. Felicia Baca highlighted the Mayor's recent State of the City speech, delivered the previous week, which is available on the Salt Lake City government's YouTube channel. During the speech, the Mayor mentioned the concept designs for the Ballpark Neighborhood, one of the standout design concepts was among the more artistically driven selections. While this project is still in its early stages and won't be developed for some time, the different design concepts are available for viewing online.

Ms. Tiffani Porter made a motion to close the meeting.